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DIRECTIONS FOR CANNING CHICKEN AT HOME

Reserve

Canning the surplus birds from the home poultry flock is often an economical practice, especially because the older birds may be used this way to better advantage than the young ones. Plump, well-fed hens, two years old and no longer at their best for egg production, have as good texture and better flavor than chickens six months old. Furthermore, practically the same canning processes are needed for sterilization, no matter what the age, and the meat from the young birds is more likely to become overcooked.

Chicken should be canned in a steam pressure cooker in order to obtain the temperatures required for sterilization (240 to 250 F., corresponding to 10 and 15 pounds steam pressure). The method of canning in a steam pressure cooker is described in Farmers' Bulletin 1471, a copy of which should be obtained and used to supplement these directions.

Preparing the Fowl.

Prepare the chickens as for cooking. Pick, singe, remove pin feathers, wash, and cut into the usual pieces for serving. Clean thoroughly, taking care not to break the gall bladder, which would make the meat unfit for use. The lungs, kidneys, eggs, and liver should not be used for canning, but the gizzard and heart may be, if desired. Trim off any large pieces of fat, so that it may not interfere with the penetration of heat. Cut the white meat in large pieces from the breast bone and shoulders, but leave the meat on the bones in other pieces. Cut the neck off close to the body. Use the very bony pieces, such as back, neck, and perhaps the feet, after they have been skinned, for making broth to fill up the containers. Make the broth by covering the bony pieces with lightly salted cold water, bring to the simmering point, and simmer until the meat becomes tender.

Preheating and Packing

The aim in all methods of preheating is to heat the meat thoroughly, but not to cook it. If cooked to doneness, a subsequent canning process will overcook it.

Either tin cans or pint glass jars may be used as containers. Quart size glass jars are not recommended because this size does not allow the heat to penetrate as readily and sterilization is not as certain unless a considerably longer heating process is used.

Pack the chicken into clean tin cans, or hot glass jars, without cramming, and use some pieces with bone in each container. Leave space for liquid to circulate around the meat. Work rapidly, so the container can be put into the hot cooker before the meat has cooled.

Preheating may be done by any one of the following methods:

Method 1. Place the pieces of chicken in a small quantity of boiling water, lower the heat, and simmer. After thoroughly heating, pack in tin cans or glass jars, bring the broth to boiling, and pour over the chicken to within one-half inch of the top of the container. Add salt, 1/2 to 1 teaspoon per pint. If it is desired, a small quantity of gelatin, 1 tablespoon per pint softened in cold liquid, may be added to the broth. Fully seal the tin cans, or partially seal glass jars, and place each as rapidly as prepared in the hot cooker so the meat will not be cooled.

Method 2. Place the pieces of chicken in a baking pan, add a little water and heat in a moderate oven. If the drippings are not dark brown, dilute with boiling broth prepared from the bony pieces and pour over the meat after it is packed into the containers. If the drippings are too dark, use the broth alone. Add salt, and gelatin if desired, as above. Seal as described under method No. 1.

Method 3. When tin cans are used, the chicken may be put directly into the containers. Add salt and boiling broth prepared from the bony pieces. Leave at least $3/4$ inch space at the top of the can, because the meat will expand when heated. Preheat by placing the cans in a bath of boiling water which comes to within 1 to 1-1/2 inches of the top of the can. Or the cans may be heated in a steamer. Continue heating until the meat is steaming hot. This requires about 40 to 60 minutes, depending upon the size of the can.

Processing

After preheating, packing, and sealing, the containers should be immediately processed, or heated, in the steam pressure cooker as directed below. The time periods given apply to meat which is steaming hot, or about 170° F., when packed or sealed:

For canning chicken:

No. 2 plain tin cans ..	50 minutes	at 15 pounds pressure,	or 250° F.
No. 2-1/2 " " " ..	55	" " " " "	" " "
No. 3 " " " ..	60	" " " " "	" " "
Pint glass jars	60	" " " " "	" " "

Cooling

After processing glass jars or No. 3 tin cans, allow the pressure gauge to reach zero before opening the petcock, then open it gradually so there is no sudden outrush of steam. Complete the seal on glass jars, and place them in the open air, but protected from drafts, until cooled.

When No. 2 or No. 2-1/2 tin cans are used, open the petcock on the pressure cooker gradually at the end of the processing period and allow the steam to escape. Place tin cans of all sizes in running water to cool.

